

SR 169 Corridor Study

Corridor Working Group Session

Meeting Summary

Meeting date: Thursday, December 15, 2005
Location: Maple Valley Lake Wilderness Lodge
22500 SE 248th Street, Maple Valley, WA 98038

Attendees: ***Partners in attendance:***
Mike Cummings, Peter Briglia - PSRC
Dave Zielinski – Maple Valley
Jason Paulsen – Black Diamond
Chris Searcy – City of Enumclaw
Seth Stark – WSDOT, Urban Planning Office

Partners not in attendance:
Ron Paananen – WSDOT, Northwest Region
Nick Afzali – City of Renton
Mark Melroy – King County

Others in attendance:

Richard Warren, Gary Westby, Barbara Briggs – WSDOT
Cathy Higley, Steve Sindiong – Parsons
Kathlyn Kocher – EnviroIssues

Welcome and Goals for the Day Seth Stark, WSDOT, welcomed the partners and thanked them for attending the Corridor Working Group (CWG) session. Seth also thanked Dave Zielinski for hosting the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and shared the name of the organization or jurisdiction they were representing.

Seth reviewed the session agenda and distributed a packet of materials to the group. An email was sent to the partners the week prior to the meeting with electronic versions of the documents included in the packet. The group will review the previous meeting summary and the October 2005 open house summary, review the benefit-cost methodology and results, and discuss next steps as the team finalizes the SR 169 Route Development Plan (RDP) document.

Comments on Previous CWG Meeting and Open House Summaries Seth asked for comments on the September CWG meeting summary and the October open house summary. He noted that a log of all comments from the SR 169 open house events was attached to the open house summary. The public made comments concerning the bridge at 216th Street and access to SR 169 from various housing developments along the corridor. No changes were made to the meeting or open house summaries.

**Benefit Cost
Analysis
Methodology**

Based on the comments from the Corridor Working Group meeting in late September, the 73 projects identified were grouped into three different combinations, or options to enhance corridor capacity, address access, and safety issues along the highway. The three options include:

- Option #1: Truck climbing lanes, 4/5 lanes from S 288th to Jones Road.
- Option #2: Truck climbing lanes, 4/5 lanes from S 288th to Jones Road, 6 lanes from 140th to I-405.
- Option #3: Truck climbing lanes, 4/5 lanes from S 288th to Jones Road, 6 lanes from Jones Road to I-405.

A benefit-cost analysis was performed on each of the proposed options. The first step in the benefit-cost analysis was to develop *planning level cost estimates* for each option. The second step was to estimate the benefits of each option in terms of savings in travel time and reduction of accidents.

**Benefit Cost
Analysis
Results**

The project team came up with a final cost for the different options as a whole for the corridor instead of each individual project. The project team provided the partners with a summary of the benefit-cost analysis results with attached maps and schematics of the corridor's existing conditions and proposed options.

Gary Westby, WSDOT, explained the results of the analysis. The benefit-cost ratio for all three options was above one, establishing that the benefits outweigh the costs for these projects. Since the benefit/cost ratios were very similar and relatively low, between 1.56 and 2.22, the results of the analysis alone may not be helpful for choosing a preferred option. Other types of criteria should be used to distinguish the projects from one another, such as safety.

Richard Warren, WSDOT, asked the partners to review the segment maps of the existing and proposed improvements before discussing the benefit/cost analysis results. He asked the partners to give the following feedback:

- Verify the existing conditions of the roadway;
- Indicate projects that are currently under construction or included in comprehensive plans; and
- Review the proposed projects and maps for effectiveness and accuracy.

Chris Searcy, City of Enumclaw, made the following comments on the Enumclaw segment:

- There are no existing sidewalks north of McHugh Avenue.
- Proposed sidewalks should extend to Thunder Mountain Middle School, not city limits.
- A center turn lane from Kibler to Washington is included in the Enumclaw Comprehensive Plan.
- Chris will forward the comprehensive plan to Seth.

Jason Paulsen, City of Black Diamond, made the following comments on the Black Diamond segment:

- Jason noted that future traffic issues will occur at Roberts Drive and Ravensdale Road with the approximately 2,400 new homes being developed in the far west area of the city. These developments will use Roberts Drive to access SR 169.
- Jason recalled a center turn lane north of Roberts Drive to the city limits to help manage traffic flow.
- Seth noted that the Roberts Drive and Ravensdale Road intersections are noted for intersection improvements, which will be determined at a later date.

Dave Zielinski, City of Maple Valley, made the following comments for the Maple Valley segment:

- SE 291st Street should be changed on the map to SE 288th Street.
- Traffic signals will be installed at SE 240th Street and SE 264th Street and should be noted in the existing conditions.
- The truck climbing lane is proposed from SE 231st Street to SE Bain Road on the west side of the corridor.
- Richard Warren noted that Joan Burlingame is sending WSDOT a letter of opinion from the Backcountry Horsemen of Washington on the removal of the equestrian lane over the Cedar River near SE 216th Way. The letter will be in support of removal provided there is adequate signage directing equestrian traffic to the newer path down near below the current bridge.

The following comments were made about the Cedar River segment:

- There are several proposed improvement projects at SE 216th Way to restripe the roadway, add a guardrail, increase street lighting, and realign the roadway.
- Jones Road should include intersection improvements to accommodate additional lanes.

Seth will follow-up with Nick Afzali on the Renton segment, since he was not able to attend. The partners made the following comments about the Renton segment:

- Chris Searcy noted that the difference between Option 2 and Option 3 is the proposed six lanes extending to Jones Road instead of 140th Street. The analysis shows almost twice as much benefit. He asked if the projected 2030 traffic volumes at Jones Road intersection justified the need for six lanes.

- Gary explained that the proposed six lanes in Option 2 is 2.3 miles in length, while the six lanes in Option 3 is 3.9 miles. The travel-time benefits are twice as much in Option 3 because the travel length is almost twice as long.
- Chris requested further information to determine which option should be recommended in the final Route Development Plan (RDP). He would like to see a comparison between the levels of service in 2030 with the no-build option versus the three proposed options. The project team will research this information and present it to the partners.
- Partners thought that Option 2 should extend the six lanes from I-405 to 152nd Avenue SE rather than 140th Way SE. The project team will research the travel time benefits for carrying the six lanes to 140th Way SE, 152nd Avenue SE or Jones Road.

The group discussed their reactions to the information presented. The partners agreed that more information is needed to recommend a preferred option for the final RDP. The following comments were made:

- Barb Briggs, WSDOT, noted that the benefit/cost ratio continues to go up as the six lanes are extended farther south from I-405. She asked if the analysis could determine the location where the benefit/cost ratio starts to drop off as the six lanes are extended further south.
- The project team will look at projected traffic volumes and do further research to determine where the six lanes should end.
- Jason asked for recommendations on how to best present the preferred option.

Seth explained that although other projects may have a higher benefit-cost ratio, it does not discount the importance of the projects on SR 169. The Route Development Plan will help give these projects credibility because of the group effort by local jurisdictions and agencies along the corridor. The RDP will help highlight the short and long term packages and their levels of importance. It would be helpful to focus on a safety program that includes all the necessary projects along the corridor that would improve safety for those traveling along SR 169.

Next Steps*Action Items:*

- Seth will report back to the partners about the projected traffic data at Jones Road and projected traffic volumes in 2030.
- The project team will round the dollar amounts on the Benefit Cost Summary.
- Seth will provide Dave Zielinski with detailed benefit/cost analysis data.
- Jurisdictional partners will forward updated comprehensive plans to Seth.
- The project team will make the necessary changes to the segment maps showing the existing conditions and proposed improvements.
- Seth will contact Nick Afzali and Mark Melroy for their comments on the information presented at today's meeting.
- Seth will plan on meeting with the partner's city councils or commissions by request when the final draft of the RDP is ready for public review.

Upcoming Meetings

The partners agreed to have a tentative meeting in January if further studies reveal significant information. The Corridor Working Group will meet again in February to review an internal draft of the RDP.

Handouts

- CWG Session Agenda
- SR 169 October 2005 Open House Summary and Comment Log
- SR 169 Route Development Plan Benefit-Cost Analysis Results Summary
- SR 169 Options Maps
- SR 169 Existing and Proposed Improvement Maps